The Origin of the Turks[1]

AT this moment, when the decadent condition of the Turkish power is attracting so much attention, it perhaps becomes of more interest than usual to inquire who the Turks really are, and whence they originally came. Moreover, within the last few years important archæological discoveries have been made by Messrs. Jadrintzeff and Heikel in the valleys of the Upper Yenisei and the Upper Orchon Rivers—not far from the Russo-Chinese frontiers,—which prove incontestably that twelve hundred years ago the primitive Turks had an epic literature of their own, which, if not very extensive, has at least been recorded in a manner durable enough to survive for our perusal until the present day, and circumstantial enough to confirm in the amplest way the statements of the Chinese historians.[2]

Our best authorities upon the ancient Turks are unquestionably the accounts given to us in the histories of the Chinese Sui and T'ang dynasties, covering the periods 580–618 and 618–905. The three hundred years during which these purely native dynasties ruled the Celestial Empire were preceded by a period of intermittent anarchy, during which, for over two centuries, North China was ruled by Tungusic Tartars. The history of the leading family of these—the Wei dynasty;—the celebrated compendium of Ma Twan-lin; the standard Chinese annals known as the 'Kang-mu;' and the 'Lieh-tai Ki-sz' or 'Records of Successive Dynas-

[1] Word-for-word translations of all that the Early Han History and After Han History have to say upon the ancestors of the Turks (the Hiung-nu) appeared in vols. xx. and xxi. of the *China Review*, accompanied by over 1,700 explanatory notes. I believe this is the only complete translation in existence, Deguignes's *Histoire Générale des Huns* being a mere summary, though a very full one. Mr. Wylie published a literal translation of what the Early Han History had to say (but without notes of importance) in vols. iii. and iv. of the *Anthropological Review*. I have in manuscript a literal translation of all that *Ma Twan-lin* writes about the Hiung-nu, Tungusic Tartars, Turks, Ouigours, Cathayans, &c., with over 8,500 explanatory notes taken from the histories of the *Ts'i*, *Sui*, *T'ang*, and other Chinese or Tartar dynasties, and this manuscript is at the disposal of any society that will obligingly print it. I have also over 1,000 Chinese notes on the subject taken from miscellaneous Chinese works.

[2] A full notice of the literature connected with these discoveries appeared in the *Academy* of 21 Dec. 1895.

ties;'—together with a number of fragments, poems, biographies, &c., represent our remaining authorities—so far as China alone is concerned. Next in order come the Roman or Byzantine authors,[3] Theophanes the Confessor, Theophylactus Simocatta, Menander Protector, Priscus, and others; the Persian writer Firdausi; the Kharismian Sultan Abulghazi; and the accounts of Zemarchus's mission to the Grand Khan Dizabul. The pith of what these men relate upon the subject of the early Turks is ably summarised by Deguignes in his 'Histoire Générale des Huns.' Deguignes also gives the substance of what the Chinese have to say, availing himself for this purpose of the translations of d'Herbelot, Rémusat, and the Jesuit missionaries of the eighteenth century.

We certainly know much more about the manners of the ancient Turks before and when they came into contact with the Chinese than we do about those of the ancient Britons before and when they first came into contact with the Romans: but, what with Chinese misprints (especially in their endeavours to reproduce Turkish names), want of critical order in the Chinese arrangement of events, the fact that most prominent Turks not only have several names, but have their titles confused with their names; what with mistranslations and misconceptions of the Chinese meaning by successive translators; and what with the comparative inaccessibility of such work as the translators in question have produced;—our best authorities, that is the Chinese, do not leave any very clear or definite impressions upon the mind of the general reader; while as to the Byzantine, Persian, and Tartar authors, it is difficult to nail them down to any specific statements of fact which can be verified by comparison with what the Chinese record concerning the same periods, places, and events.[4] There has also been too much of a tendency in

[3] For the Byzantine authorities I depend upon the citations given in Deguignes, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and in such works as those of Schuyler (*Turkestan*). I have added in an appendix more particular notices which I owe to the kindness of Mr. Tozer.

[4] Deguignes is full of contradictory statements, misreadings, and mistakes of all kinds. Notwithstanding this sweeping statement, I must add that I have found him exceedingly useful in correcting my own mistakes. His work is an admirable one: it only requires careful checking, Chinese misprints and defective style being usually the causes of his errors. To take one instance: the Chinese characters for the Turkish sound *teghin* differ by one insignificant stroke only from those representing the sound *tele*. Deguignes has *tele* throughout; and, although M. Devéria had pointed out several years ago in the *Toung-pao*, vol. ii., that the true sound was *teghin*, I also decided (in my work entitled *A Thousand Years of the Tartars*) for *tele*; partly because it was always so printed in my Chinese books, and partly because the learned archimandrite Palladius explained it to be a Tartar word *dere*. Then, again, Deguignes is consistently inconsistent in his use of the words Igour and Ouigour; he identifies the Haïathals first with one tribe and then the other; he is provokingly positive in identifying the Geougen of China with the Avars of Europe. The fact is that first translators from the Chinese can never be correct; we must wait until more is translated, and compare one part of Chinese history with the other; we must also check the results by the latest European researches, which open up new lights every

those modern writers who have made a special study of Tartar life and history, or who have themselves visited the valleys and steppes which first gave birth to the Turks, to form hasty conclusions and generalisations. Thus, places a thousand miles apart are supposed to be the same; a tribe long extinct is stated to have re-appeared in Europe; on the ground of slight similarity in sound alone, a conquered nation—for instance, the Haïathals—which bore that name before the Turks (so called) came into existence, is connected with a tribe of Ouigours, thousands of leagues away in a different direction, which afterwards conquered the Turks; Turks are confused with Mongols, and Mongols with Tunguses; in short, the whole subject is in a state of wellnigh inextricable chaos and confusion.

The object of this paper is to endeavour to keep fact or positive statements quite separate from conjecture and theory; to quote the different authorities in order of date, and to collate them where they appear to agree; to discuss reasonable probabilities when the absence of positive statement forces us to have recourse to conjecture; and then to proceed, step by step, until we shall have put together a continuous and, as far as may be, intelligible chain of evidence, establishing one point only, the point of origin, in the first instance. A good starting-point will be the date when first the word 'Turk' came into existence. And here, fortunately, we are face to face with the most definite Chinese statements of fact. According to the Chinese, the word 'Turk' was a Turkish word meaning 'helmet,' and was specifically applied to the nomad tribe which formed the original nucleus of the Turkish power, owing to one of the mountain peaks in the range below which the tribe lived having a shape like a rimmed helmet. Now, in the first place, the recently discovered Turkish inscriptions of over a thousand years ago, deciphered by Professor Dr. Vilhelm Thomsen, of Copenhagen, and the Russian academician Dr. Radloff, of St. Petersburg, give as the national name the four letters T Ü R K, repeated over and over again, and in such a way as in meaning to correspond indubitably with the mutilated Chinese forms *t'u-küe*, *tut-küt*, or *tolköl*, as they sound in different provinces to the ear of to-day. Consequently, there can be no doubt that when the Chinese endeavoured to explain the origin of the tribal name they meant the Turkish word *Türk*, and no other. As to whether the Chinese were correct in saying that *Türk* meant helmet, it may be noted that, according to David's 'Grammaire Turke,' a word having almost exactly that sound is still the Turkish word for 'helmet;' and, according to Rémusat, a word of nearly that sound still means 'a casque' at Constantinople. Abulghazi is also quoted as an authority for the statement that *turkak* means 'a guard.' Dr. Radloff says nothing about a

year. Until Chinese history is thoroughly ransacked, we 'sinologists' are all one-eyed amongst the blind.

helmet in his vocabulary (*sub voce* Türk), and Professor Thomsen does not appear to be convinced that there is such a word now, though he admits a Mongol word *tulga*. In any case, the question is one always susceptible of proof: if there is such a word, the link of evidence becomes all the stronger; if not, then this is no proof that it did not once exist, as do many other Turkish words now obsolete. In any case we are distinctly told that it once really existed, whilst two modern authorities of, it is presumed, some generally recognised competence, to a certain extent confirm the statement as above explained. If we inquire whether the Turks really wore helmets, and whether such helmets were likely to have resembled a mountain peak, we find that some of the stone bas-reliefs recently discovered, as above mentioned, do positively represent the Turkish khan himself (amongst others) with a rimmed helmet upon his head; and a peculiar and striking mountain peak might surely as well resemble that as anything else.

The next thing to ask is: who first gave the word 'Turk' to the tribe; and when; and what tribe was it? The Chinese categorically answer all these questions for us. Previously to the establishment in North China of the Tungusic dynasties of which we have spoken above, the Chinese had been engaged in several centuries of warfare with a nomad nation called by them Hiung-nu, or 'Hiung slaves.' To this day the first half of the word is in some parts of China still pronounced *Hün*, and the addendum 'slaves' has a counterpart in the word Wo-nu, or 'Wo slaves'—the Japanese of that time. As usual, the Chinese, in attempting to reproduce a foreign word, have either coupled the essential part of it with a Chinese catchword, or have chosen two Chinese characters representing the whole native sound as nearly as possible, and at the same time possessing a Chinese meaning of reproachful value. The Hiung-nu were, in fact, the Huns,[5] who afterwards appeared as the Hunni in Europe; but already in 92 A.D. a good half of them had been driven west by the Chinese and the Tunguses. One of the Hiung-nu titles was *Tsügü* (as the

[5] This may seem a very unjustifiable conclusion in view of Sir H. H. Howorth's statement in the *Journal of the Anthropological Society*, vol. iii. p. 398: 'No European scholar of any repute (save perhaps Dr. Latham) connects the Huns with the Hiung-nu. The Huns were . . . a race of Ugrians, led by a caste of another race now represented by some of the Lesghian tribes of the Caucasus.' I have given my reasons in full in the work alluded to in note 4, and I have there also taken great pains to point out the distinction between 'peoples' and 'ruling castes.' Professor V. Thomsen, of Copenhagen, writes to me: 'The real Scythians of the Greeks, or at least the bulk of them, were certainly not Turks, but quite other people: the description you mention does not even apply to the bulk of the ancient Scythians; in later times this name was used in a rather wide and distinct meaning; then perhaps it may have comprised also Turk nations. Even in the time of the great migrations the Huns are kept apart from the Scythians.' As I am now showing that the very idea of 'Turk' only originated in A.D. 543, of course I agree that it is certain that neither Scythians nor Huns could have been Turks.

Chinese try to represent it), and one of the tribes that remained behind when the more northerly hordes fled west took the family name of Tsügü because their chiefs had formerly held that title under the great nomad empire. This tribe or family ruled a small principality in the central part of the modern Chinese province of Kansuh from A.D. 396 to 439; and when the Wei dynasty of Tungusic Tartars crushed this aspiring state, one Asena, with 500 tents, placed himself under the protection of the then dominant nomad power west of the Tunguses, which, following the French translators from whom Gibbon borrows, we may call the Geougen. For 'several generations' Asena and his horde served the Geougen as iron-workers in an iron-producing district, and we are repeatedly and distinctly told that this district was somewhere between what are now called Etzinai and Kokonor, on the borders of, if not actually in, the modern Chinese province of Kansuh. It was *nowhere near the Irtish*, as is invariably stated by modern authors.[6] One of Asena's descendants was Notur or Noturu. As the sequel tells us that Notur's son Tumen founded the Turkish power in A.D. 543, it is open to us to assume that 'several generations,' counting from Asena in A.D. 439 to Tumen in A.D. 543, would make Notur at least the great-grandson of Asena. It was Notur who first applied the word 'Turk' to his people. Lest it should be supposed that we are over-credulous in accepting a mountain name as a fit designation for a tribe, we hasten to state that both of the rival Tungusic nations which assisted the Chinese to drive west their secular masters and enemies the Huns are positively stated to have taken their tribal names from the mountains in which they originally took refuge from Hun or Hiung tyranny.

The Chinese also tell us in positive terms that the Turks were a branch of the Hiung-nu; and we have already seen that the ruling family under whom the Turks lived before they took refuge with the Geougen were themselves Hiung-nu, bearing as a clan name a Hiung-nu title. It is not quite clear whether the majority of the ruling Geougen were of Hun or Tungusic origin. This is a point, however, which further investigation may well succeed in clearing up. It is certain that the hero or founder of the race was a slave—though possibly only a captive slave—and that he was bred up by Tunguses. Slave dynasties were the rule rather than the exception in later Perso-Turkish history. The few Geougen words which the Chinese give us, together with other miscel-

[6] Rémusat and Deguignes (I think) were the first to start the Irtish theory, which has been repeated by every other subsequent writer. It would certainly be much more convenient for us to have the early Turks up there; but I have given the fullest proofs in *A Thousand Years of the Tartars* that they certainly did not begin their career there, but on the borders of China. Doubtless kindred tribes always lived on the Irtish, and doubtless the Turks soon found their way thither; but that is another matter altogether.

laneous indications, lead us to suspect a Finnish blend;[7] but in any case it seems clear that there was more of Hun than of Tungus in the mixture. This particular point, though of importance, is not relevant to our present issue, except in so far as it may explain why the Turks preferred Geougen to Tungusic rule. It is beyond all doubt on other grounds, apart from the specific evidence given above, that the Turks were Hiung-nu or Huns, for quite a number of words—such as *tengri*, 'heaven;' *kutlugh*, 'happy;' *doghri*, 'virtuous,' &c., are given by the Chinese as having been common to each nation at intervals of 500 years apart. Moreover, one of the Chinese inscriptions just discovered, bearing Turkish letters on the reverse side, historically connects, in the mind of the Chinese emperor, the visit to China of the Hiung-nu khan in B.C. 51 with the submissiveness of the Turks in A.D. 732.

Hence, leaving aside for the present the irrelevant question whether the Hiung-nu of China are the same people as the Hunni of Europe, it is certain that the Turks, when they first took the national name of Türk, were of Hiung-nu origin; that the mountains along the lower slopes of which they lived—known to the Chinese, like the Altaï, as 'Golden Mountains'—were quite close to China, and not near the Irtish as is commonly supposed; that Notur, the father of their political founder Tumen, first used the name 'Türk' as a tribal designation in the first half of the sixth century; that Notur had precedents for doing this; that modern philology supports him in a fair measure; that recent discoveries give us well-preserved specimens of helmets carved in stone; and that nothing in the recently discovered Turkish inscriptions runs counter to these points in particular, or stultifies any other part of Chinese history in general.

Tumen only reigned for two years: having rendered excellent military service to his masters the Geougen, he thought himself entitled to a Geougen princess. His advances were repelled; he revolted, overthrew the Geougen empire, and himself assumed the title of *Khakan* or Khan, which had been used for the first time by the Geougen, and seems (in the absence, however, of positive evidence) to have been borrowed by the Geougen from their former masters the Tunguses. The earlier word *Han* or *Khan* (not

[7] The miscellaneous indications to which I refer are the wizard-like practices, which resemble those of the modern Suomi or Finns, as described in the *Revue de Paris* for 1895; the strange personal names; the uncouth manners; and the fact that the *Yüe-pan* (Hiung-nu) tribes were astonished at their appearance. I have tried in vain to find out what 'scholars of repute' mean by 'Ugrian,' and I should be glad to have a clear definition of this word. I wrote to one such—a very distinguished authority, who often used the word—and was not at all surprised to find that he had no idea of its origin. So far as I can understand the ethnology of Central and North Asia, there are only two main stocks of language (omitting all Tibetan, Tungus, Corean, or Japanese connexions), the Finnish and the Turkish. These expressions are of course only emblematical, for the Finns do not call themselves Finns, nor the Turks Turks.

Khakan, as with the Geougen and Turks) occurs in history, apparently as a Tungusic title; and it is notable that this same single word *Han* is often used by the Chinese in place of the double word *Khakan*.[8] The very full description of the Turkish social life and military organisation given to us by the Chinese historians corresponds entirely with that given to us by the later historians of the life and organisation of the Hiung-nu; with that given to us by western authorities of the life and organisation of the Huns and Avars; and with the positive statements of the Turks themselves, as recorded in the Yenisei and Orchon inscriptions recently deciphered.

The mythical stories touching the remote origin of Tumen's ancestors have a certain resemblance to each other, whether in Persian, Chinese, or other dress; but this resemblance, though perhaps sufficient to strengthen the probability of there being some grains of truth in a mass of fiction, is not sufficient to justify our giving an historical place to what at best is but conjecture and tradition. The only thing we can say positively is that they were Hiung-nu, and that their pedigree can be traced through the Tsügü family. The history of the Hiung-nu is perfectly well authenticated,[9] but, belonging as it does to an earlier period, requires no further treatment here. The first link in our chain is therefore solidly attached to an historical base. As to positive western statements, Abulghazi mentions one Tumana, Khan of the Turks, and says he had nine sons, one of whom, Zagsu, was father of Butakin. Tumana is doubtless the Chinese Tumen; but it is as likely as not that Abulghazi obtained his data directly or indirectly from Chinese books, for the Turkestan States are at this period described by the Chinese as being fairly well versed in Celestial literature, as indeed had also been the later generations of the Hiung-nu and Tunguses who ruled in North China. The Chinese tell us that Tumen died in A.D. 553, leaving at least five sons, Isiki, Mukan, Tapo, Yangsu, and Tateu. That these five were all Tumen's sons, and in the above order, is nowhere categorically stated as a whole; but it may be deduced almost positively from disconnected statements concerning the relationship of his successors one to the other. It is highly probable that, even if they were all sons, they came from mothers of varying degrees of nobility.[10] This point was of vital importance, both in the Hiung-nu

[8] The Manchu emperors, before they conquered China, were officially addressed as *Khan* by the Chinese. I have the whole correspondence by me now: the character is the one used by the Chinese for the Tungusic predecessors of the Manchus 1,500 years ago.

[9] See *China Review*, vols. xx., xxi.

[10] The Chinese contradict themselves; Mukan is variously stated to be the son and the younger brother of Tumen. Deguignes variously states that Tateu was brother of Tumen and uncle of Tumen's grandson. Similar discrepancies occur touching other princes; no two histories are quite alike.

and Turkish systems, in deciding questions of succession.[11] Zagsu may possibly be Yangsu, and the syllables *takin* almost certainly represent the Chinese *tekin*, which stands for the Turkish *tügin* ('prince of the blood') of the Orchon inscriptions. But this is all that we can safely say: the names of the other eight sons given by Abulghazi can in no way be tortured to resemble any of the remaining four names recorded by the Chinese.

Isiki died almost as soon as he came to the throne. He was succeeded by his brother the *djigin* Mukan (the Muyui [12] of certain writers such as Schuyler who have misread the name). Mukan reigned from A.D. 553 to 572, and it was under him that the Turkish Empire attained its highest early development. He completely broke up the vestiges of the Geougen power in the Ili and Hami regions; annihilated the political ascendency of the Ephthalites in Kapchak and Maouarennahar; asserted a suzerainty over the Kirghiz and nomad Tungusic tribes; and established a system of government which was practically bounded by Japan and Corea, China and Thibet, Persia and the Eastern Roman Empire. The rival Tungusic dynasties, that is the civilised and settled branches, ruling as emperors of North China, each in turn did all in their power to curry favour with the formidable Turkish khan, and the Abars [13] (called by the Chinese Yüe-ban) soon disappeared entirely from Asia. According to Menander and Theophylactus, they first appeared in Circassia in A.D. 588; their subsequent intercourse with Justinian, Justin, and the other Byzantine emperors down to Heraclius is a matter of simple history, until, in the last years of the eighth century, the remnants of the nation were destroyed by Charles the Great and his son Pippin. The Chinese inform us distinctly that the Yüe-ban were the remnants of the Hiung-nu who had fled north-west in the first century of our era. Gibbon, following Deguignes and other French translators, wrongly identifies the Avars with the Geougen, a nation so inferior in civilisation to the Yüe-ban that this latter nation declined in disgust to hold any diplomatic intercourse with them. Besides, the history of the Geougen is precisely recounted by the Chinese; they never had any doings beyond Turkestan, or even in it; unless it be a brush or two with the Haïathals, Ephthalites, or Indo-Scyths, as

[11] An excellent instance has just occurred in the Persian succession, the Kadjars being genuine Turks.

[12] There is the faintest possible distinction between the characters *kan* and *yü*. Deguignes makes innumerable blunders of this kind; however the fault is not his own, but that of the Chinese type-cutters.

[13] My view is that the Yüe-ban and their predecessors, the Hiung-nu, correspond to the Avars and their predecessors the Huns, in each case much the same hordes having taken new habitats and new leaders. I need hardly say that this view is only provisional. One positive Chinese statement militates against this view, and that is the fact that polyandry was common amongst the Yüe-ban: it is never hinted at amongst the Hun-Turks; but it is common in Tibet.

they are variously called. Moreover, the 3,000 Geougen who had taken refuge in North China after their rout by the Khan Mukan were surrendered to and butchered by that khan's envoy in A D. 555; and it is certain that the Chinese, who have plenty to say about the Persians, Kirghiz, Karluks, and other Turkestan tribes at a date subsequent to this, would not have ignored the continued existence of the Geougen if it had really been of consequence to the Turks.

There seems to be some doubt as to when the first Turkish mission was sent to Constantinople; Theophanes the Confessor and Theophanes of Byzantium differ: one account says the 36th year of Justinian; another says in Justin's time. In 563, at the earliest, the Turks are said to have sent envoys to invite the eastern emperor not to give asylum to the remains of the Avars. According to Menander, the Turks allowed the Sogdians to send an envoy to Khosrou of Persia to arrange for a freer overland silk trade with China; there is nothing unlikely in this, for 400 or 500 years earlier the Parthians had been approached in the same spirit. Maniach was the name of the Sogdian envoy; but Catulphus the Ephthalite, then at the Persian court, anxious to weaken both the Persian and the Turkish power, succeeded in thwarting the negotiations. Fearing Turkish resentment, Persia sent envoys to North China; this was in A.D. 567. Maniach thereupon advised the Turks to deal directly with Constantinople; and, accordingly, in 568 a Turkish mission travelled thither *viâ* Caucasia. Justin learnt from them that their khan's name was Dizabul, and that there were four subordinate governments. It is quite certain that this exchange of missions must have taken place under the Khan Mukan, who, as we have seen, reigned twenty years at least; his own encampment was still near the Chinese frontier, and Dizabul must have been one of the *jabgu* (or *zep-hu* as Chinese history writes it) in charge of the west. There could not be better evidence in favour of this view than the fact that T'ung *zep-hu* or the 'supreme *jabgu*,' was actually the Chinese form of the title given to the chief Turk in the west who reigned subsequent to A.D. 619. *Di* is probably a corruption of some Turkish qualifying word such as 'the fifth,' or 'the great,' or 'the young;' and *zabul* is most likely to represent the word *jabgu* of the recently discovered Turkish inscriptions. In Mongol and Turkish alike the intermediate guttural is often slurred over, just as Rubruquis wrote *Môal* for 'Mongol' or 'Mogul.' According to Deguignes, the Byzantine authors speak of a Turkish khan named Tardou; but he does not tell us what they say of him, nor, at this moment, can the present writer lay his hand upon Theophylactus or Menander in order to find it out. At any rate, Tardou must be the Chinese Tat-t'ou, or Tateu, son of Tumen and brother of Mukan, who is stated by the Chinese to have arrogated to himself the title of 'Buka Khan of the

West.' In 599 he contested the supreme khanship with Isiki's grandson Turri, or T'uli, the ninth legitimate ruler (not to be confused with his grandson of the same name, a *protégé* of the Chinese).

During the reign of the fifth supreme khan, Shapur, the son of Isiki, from 581 to 587, the Chinese tell us, in almost as many words, that Amro, son of Tapo or Tapur the fourth khan, Dalobian 'the Fat,' the son of Mukan the third khan, and Tat-t'ou, the son of Tumen, were all reigning simultaneously. This corresponds precisely with the Byzantine statement that there were four subordinate governments; for an arrangement of this sort, made by Shapur, was most likely one that had already existed. The Hiung-nu also had three or four viceregal governments. In fact, the Chinese tell us distinctly that Shapur was made a 'lesser khan' during the reign of his uncle Tapur, who also appointed his own younger brother (son of Dannu) to the post of 'Buri Khan of the West.' This *buri* may be the Butakin or Bu(ri)*tägin* of Abulghazi, or perhaps Buka or Bu-a stands for Bu. Dannu might possibly be Tardou, as both *t* and *n* are frequently used by the Chinese to represent the final *r*, which they possess not: thus *Ansäk* for 'Parthia' or Arsac; *T'ut-küe* for *Türkö* or 'Turks.' But unfortunately Dannu is sometimes written Nudan.

The Turkish empire gained its greatest aggressive power under Turri's nephew Gheri, who was, however, after many wars, at last conquered and taken prisoner by the Chinese in 630. Meanwhile Chinese influence had also extended to the rival empire of the Western Turks, which, ever since 581, had formally become politically alienated from the Eastern branch, to which apparently it had never been closely united. The reason was that Dalobian 'the Fat,' whom the Turks had declined to accept as Mukan's successor on account of the plebeian quality of his mother's blood, had words with his cousin Shapur touching the right to the supreme succession. The result was that Dalobian threw himself into the arms of Tardou, and a solemn schism took place. The astute Chinese, whose deliberate policy it was to set the warlike Turks at each other's throats, carefully fostered ill-feeling between the rival khans. At first their intrigues recoiled upon their own heads, for the five khans—Shapur, Amro, Dalobian, Tardou, and Tanhan—simultaneously invaded China at the head of 400,000 men in A.D. 582. In the end, however, intellect prevailed over brute force, and, as we have said, Gheri's nephew and successor, Turri the Second, ruled as a Chinese viceroy rather than an independent khan.

The Eastern Turks rose again to great political power under the Khan Mörchö early in the eighth century, and again under his nephew Mogilan. The recently discovered Turkish inscriptions on the Orchon recount the doughty deeds of Mörchö's nephew and successor, Mogilan, and his brother the *tägin* Kül, whose faithful

service secured the throne to Mogilan, and cemented a solid peace with China. These last two words, pronounced in Chinese *t'e-k'in k'üet*—the *t*, as usual, standing for *l*—were the key which led to the discovery by Professor Thomsen of the old Turkish alphabet—a form of Aramean—and thus to the complete decipherment of the inscriptions by himself and Dr. Radloff of the Russian Academy. It is sufficient to state here that the Turkish epics, carved upon funeral tablets presented to them by the Chinese emperor, amply confirm the truth of Chinese history in every particular—that is, where it is possible to arrive at the right meaning; and therefore the above account of the origin of the Turks may be reasonably accepted as sound, except where doubts are specifically suggested. By the middle of the eighth century the second Turkish empire had been conquered and replaced by that of the Ouigours, a people also of Hiung-nu origin.

The Western branch of the Turks had their chief encampment in the Issikul region. Their relations with Persia were more extensive than those with China, but as late as A.D. 931 envoys were also sent to the more eastern court. It was from the agglomeration of tribes or states ruled by the Turgäs and Karluk successors of the Asena family in the west that emanated the Khozars, Uzes, Patzinacs, and even the dynasties of the Tulunides and Ikhshidides of Egypt; the Ghaznevides, Ghourides, and Seljuks of Persia and Turkestan; and finally, after the Mongol conquests, the Osmanlis, who still reign at Constantinople. Of course, the successive intermixtures of the Turks with the Persian, Syrian, and Caucasian races have totally altered the aspect of the modern Turk, who, indeed, objects to the word 'Turk' being applied to him at all; yet it is perfectly easy, with the assistance of western history alone, to trace his origin step by step from the Caspian to the Hellespont. The object of this paper, however, is simply to endeavour to establish and make clear the single question of the true origin of the Turks, who, whether as Osmanlis, Kadjars, Uzbeks, Mongols, Kirghiz, or what not, practically cover much the same ground in Asia as they did 2,000 years ago,—always, of course, with the addition of a slice in Europe.

EDWARD HARPER PARKER.

APPENDIX.

I AM indebted to the Rev. H. F. Tozer, of Oxford, for the following notices, taken by him from Menander (Dindorf's 'Historici Graeci Minores,' vol. ii.) and Theophylactus Simocatta ('Historiae,' book vii.)

A Turkish embassy led by Maniach crossed the Caucasus and reached Constantinople in A.D. 568, where they conversed with the emperor Justin II through interpreters. They informed him that there were four

chieftaincies of the Turks, and that Dizabul[1] was ruler of the whole nation. They said they had completely conquered the Ephthalitæ.[2] The emperor asked how many Avars[3] had escaped from the Turks, and was told twenty thousand. The Byzantine envoy Zemarchus accompanied the Turks back, and found Dizabul in the mountain called Ektag.[4] He accompanied Dizabul on his expedition against Persia.[5] When the expedition met the Persian envoys, the Greek envoys were dismissed by Dizabul, and took with them another Turkish envoy in place of Maniach, deceased. The new envoy was Tagma, who had the title of Tarchan,[6] and took Maniach's son along with him. The Greeks passed the river Oéch,[7] and then after a considerable journey reached a large lake. Here a Greek named George and twelve Turks took a short cut to Constantinople.[8] Zemarchus skirted the lake shore for twelve days, until he

[1] Mukan, *alias* Djigin, *alias* Yen-tu, is what the Chinese call the khan (553–572).

[2] The Chinese say Mukan conquered the Yep-thal or Yet-tat.

[3] The Chinese mention a race called Yueh-pan, or Ethar, a little north-west of Ili; they are positively described as being direct descendants of the Hiung-nu, and as being disgusted (about A.D. 450) with the filthy habits of their eastern neighbours, the Geougen, against whom they allied themselves with China to make war. There were 200,000 of them. Gibbon, accepting the authority of Deguignes, asserts that the Geougen were the Avars. There is nothing in Chinese history to justify this belief. All the Geougen who escaped to China were basely butchered at the Turkish request in A.D. 555–556. But the khan Mukan is said by Ma Twan-lin to have broken up 'to the westwards the Geougen and Yep-thal.' I find that Ma Twan-lin has interpolated the words 'Geougen and,' which do not exist in any Chinese original history. Deguignes (vol. ii. p. 352) says the Geougen butchered in China were not all; the greater part *must have* (*ont dû rester dans la Tartarie ou se retirer vers l'ouest*) *gone west*, where this part of them were known as Avars. Further on he calls these the 'false Avars,' Ogors, or Sogors, and explains how the peoples of the Volga thought they were the true Avars, and therefore gave them the Avar name. Deguignes also identifies the Toula of the true Avars with the Til of the false Avars: *i.e.* he makes the Volga the same as the river of Karakorum. Thus our only authority contradicts himself, and admits that his identifications are 'false:' his geography is also worthless.

[4] The Chinese place the khan's residence at Mount Tukin; but the statements of Deguignes, Klaproth, and others that this was 'near the Irtish,' 'north of Ordous,' 'north of the desert,' &c., do not point to any definite locality. I have always been of opinion that Etzinai was the locality, but until I have finished reading all the Chinese histories I reserve my final judgment.

[5] I cannot find any Chinese statement that the Turks attacked the Persians earlier than the schism of Dalobian or Talopien, Mukan's son. On account of his mother's low quality, Talopien lost the succession, and set up as khan of the western Turks somewhere about A.D. 573, or possibly 581.

[6] The Chinese frequently speak of a Turkish rank *tat-kwan*, *tah-kan*, which (as with *yepthal*) is etymologically *tar-kan*. The word *ta-r-han* is frequently used as a title in the early Manchu history.

[7] The Chinese call the Oxus the Wei, and the large lake may be the Aral.

[8] Deguignes' statement that Persia sent envoys to China in A.D. 567 requires qualification. The Chinese distinguish between Parthia (An-sik or Arsac) and Persia (Po-sz): it was Parthia that sent envoys; but, as Parthia had long ceased to exist, it must mean a part of what we call Persia. Deguignes, vol. ii. p. 350, quoting Gregory of Tours and Adonis, says that in 561 Sigibert felt the Avar fury at Metz. Quoting Theophylactus and Theophanes, he also speaks (p. 353) of 'the Ogors. . . *que nous n'appellerons désormais qu'Avares.*' There appears to be abundant evidence that Justinian had already utilised friendly Ugurs or Utigurs against another tribe called Cutrigurs, and that Justin was his general. There is no difficulty, therefore, in

reached the river Ich. Then he crossed the Daïch, the Attilas,[9] and the Cophen, all four of which flow into the north side of the Caspian Sea. Between the Attilas and the Cophen the tribe of the Ugurs or Utigurs was settled. After passing the Cophen they entered the country of the Alans,[10] whose chief was friendly to the Greeks, but refused to allow the Turks into his presence until they had put off their arms. After this they traverse the Caucasus and reach the Black Sea, whence they are conveyed, by way of Trebizond, to Constantinople.[11]

The Byzantine empire sent another mission to the Turks in A.D. 575, under Valentinus, who took back with him 106 Turks. These Turks had gradually accumulated in Constantinople, having in batches accompanied five other Byzantine return missions under Anancastes, Eutychius, Valentinus (the same man), Herodianus, and Paulus the Cilician. But nothing of these five intermediate missions is recorded. The object of Valentinus's mission was to announce the accession of Tiberius II, and cement the existing alliance. Valentinus from Kherson passed through a Scythian province ruled by the woman Accagas, subject to Anagaeus, chief of the Utigurs. At last he reached Turxanthus, son of Dizabul,[12] who had recently died. Turxanthus was one of eight[13] chiefs between whom the rule of the Turks was divided: the eldest and supreme in command of these was called Arsilas.[14] At the conference Valentinus urged that, in accordance with the

accepting the Emba, Jaik, and Volga as three of the four rivers. The Chinese are very plain that the Ephthalites were the western neighbours of the Geougen, whose short rule is never for one instant, however indirectly, supposed by them to have extended west of the Balkash. It is, therefore, for these further reasons, monstrous to suppose that the Avars of 561 before Metz can be the Geougen of 553 in China. If a guess must be made, there is no difficulty in supposing, as in fact we are told, that the name of Avars was erroneously given to the Ogors. Who the Ogors were from a Chinese point of view is another question.

[9] The Chinese mention a river A-teh, north of the Kangli tribe (*i.e.* Captchak).

[10] The Chinese mention the name Alan, near the Caspian, as early as the second century. I believe Ammianus Marcellinus speaks of 'Alans, surnamed Tanaites,' fighting with the Goths. The most convincing statement of all is that of Ma Twan-lin (Western Turks), in which, after mentioning 30,000 Turks along the Volga (A-téh) and north of Captchak (K'ang-li), he says, 'East of the Byzantine empire (Fu-lin) were 20,000 more, belonging to the A-lan and other tribes.' Surely this is conclusive?

[11] Mr. Tozer informs me that, except in so far as above given, nothing is recorded to have been said about either Avars or Persians.

[12] The Chinese say Mukan died in 572. The only son of his mentioned is Talopien, which word is stated to be Turkish for 'the Fat' or 'the Squat.' During Mukan's lifetime Talopien seems to have gone off in a huff to his province in the west, and that the word Turxanthus evidently refers to him is plain from the fact that the Chinese style him the '*tah-kan* of A-po.' Mukan was succeeded by his brother T'a-pot, or Tapur, and in 581 Talopien openly broke with him, and sought help from his uncle Tat-t'ou, or Tardu. It is impossible at present to account for the name Dizabul, except on the assumption that it contains a Turkish word, such as *zap-ghu* (Chinese *ziep-hu*), meaning 'royal agnate.'

[13] The Chinese mention the following chiefs in a way which permits of the supposition that they were all 'lesser khans,' or Cæsars, under the supreme khan Tapur, or Augustus: Shedu, Buli, Shaporo, Amro (on the river Toula, near Kiachta), Yangsu, Tat-t'ou, Chulohou (the sounds are, of course, only approximate).

[14] The Chinese frequently mention the tribal and personal name A-si-lan, which is evidently Arslan, 'a lion;' but Tapur is never called by any other name, and the Arslan tribe seems to have belonged to the Ouigour Turks.

former treaty, as the Romans were now at war with the Persians, the Turks ought also to attack the Persians.[15] Turxanthus boasted to the Greeks of his supremacy over the Avars, the Alans, and the Utigurs.[16] He made the Greeks lacerate their faces in token of grief for Dizabul's death.[17] Finally Turxanthus sent the Greeks further into the interior to the other Turkish chiefs, and among them to his relative Tardu,[18] who was stationed in Mount Ektel; and he threatened that he would capture the town of Bosporus. For that reason he despatched Bochan with a large force of Turks, who were assisted by the troops of Anagæus.

In the reign of Maurice[19] the khan of the Turks sent envoys to announce his victories. This khan had subdued first the Abdeli,[20] who are also called Ephthalitae, and afterwards the Avars. Some of the defeated Avars betook themselves to the inhabitants of Tangast, which is a famous city, 1,500 miles distant from the Turks here spoken of, and on the borders of India. The barbarous people who occupied the country in the neighbourhood of Tangast[21] were very populous and warlike. Others

[15] The Chinese do not mention any fighting with the Persians until about A.D. 610; but there are plenty of statements in Persian history (e.g. *Encyc. Brit.*) to the effect that Khosrou was mixed up with the Turks long previous to 579, and that his son Hormizd IV was born of a Turk mother.

[16] It is not relevant to our present purpose to inquire who the Utigurs were; it is quite clear that they occupied the territory to the north-east of the Black Sea. We have seen that there is no difficulty with the Alans. As to the Avars, in addition to what we have said above, we may point out that at this very date the Chinese mention a tribe called A-bat (etymologically precisely Avar) as capturing the family of the *tah-kan* of A-po. But this was a small tribe numbering only 1,700 soldiers, and its habitat was originally far away towards modern Irkutsk. Gibbon confesses his confusion (in his attempt to follow Deguignes in his labyrinthine distinctions) between the invisible 'true' Avars and the palpable 'false' ones, not to mention the confusion between Ogours and Avars, Ogours and Utigours. It is not clear what Gibbon means by 'Varchonites or Ogors.' One thing is at least certain. The Geougen of China are certainly *not* the Avars of Metz and Pannonia.

[17] The Chinese mention this custom, and say that the Kirghis did *not* do it.

[18] This is plainly Tah-t'ou: the same Chinese syllable *Tat*, or *Tar*, does duty in *Tar*xanthus and Eph*thal*. The Chinese make out Tardu to be the younger brother of Mukan, and it seems that he had usurped the title of 'Buka, khan of the west,' before his nephew the *tah-kan* of Apo fled to him. The Chinese tell us most precisely that Apo's dominions were bounded by the state of Kashgar to the south, and by two seas (not identifiable with certainty) to the north and west. The Karluks and many other tribes, all speaking much the same language, were subject to him. There is no reason why we should not accept Ektag, Ektel, as the equivalent of the Turkish and Mongol Altai, Altun Tagh, the Chinese Kin Shan, or 'Gold Range.' But the same name, *Kin Shan*, was applied to another range (possibly a spur of the Altaī) quite close to the Chinese frontier, and the true cradle of the Turkish race. In 'Bochan' we are tempted to recognise 'Buka,' which, like Apo, was probably an hereditary title.

[19] 582–602. The khans of the Turks, during this period, were Shaporo, 581–587; Chulohou, 587–588; Tulan, 588–599; and Durli or Turri, 599–609.

[20] The word Abdeli is quite compatible with the Chinese *Yep-t'at* (or Üptal, as the Coreans still pronounce it). It looks as though the khan were boasting of his ancestor Mukan's victories, as the Chinese say nothing of the Ephthalites at this date. The Yüe-pan may be the Avars, but, as we have seen, it is difficult to be certain.

[21] The word Tangut, applied to Tibet, suggests itself; but it is a serious question whether it appears anything like so early as this in Chinese history. Neither of the Avar branches, according to this account, fled west; both fled towards the Pamir. By 'Avars' could the Greeks mean what the recently discovered Turkish inscriptions call

of the Avars fled to the people called Moukri, who were near the land of Tangast. Next the khan subdued the race of the Ogor, who were situated towards the east, near the river Til, which the Turks call 'Black.' The earliest chiefs of this race were called Var and Chunni, from which certain tribes obtained their names.

In the time of Justinian [22] part of the Var and Chunni tribes fled, and established themselves in Europe. After the defeat of the Ogor, civil war arose among the Turks. A relation of the khan, called Touroum, aroused a faction against him, and a pitched battle was fought at a place called Icar, which lies in the middle of a great plain, 400 miles distant from the Golden Mountain. The khan was victorious, and it was this victory which he notified to the emperor Maurice.[23] It is a custom of the Turks to allow the chief khan to occupy the Golden Mountain.[24] At about this time the tribes called Tarniach and Cotzager [25] (who were also descendants of Var and Chunni) escaped from the Turks, and, flying to Europe, joined the Avars, who are under the dominion of the khan.

'Ogouz'—that is, 'Ouigours'? But this explanation, again, would not fit in with the known movements of the Ouigours; and moreover the conquest of the Ogor near the Til agrees admirably with the Chinese Ouigours near the Tula. [Confusion has arisen in some authors' minds through taking this word Til to mean *A-til*, or 'Volga.'] The Chinese tell us the Ouigours were vassals to the Turks, and that between 605 and 616 they revolted against the Turkish tyranny. The Var and the Chunni, it must be supposed, account for Gibbon's mysterious 'Varchonites.' The chiefs of the Hiung-nu were called by the Chinese Shan-yü (the Zenghi of my book on the Tartars); and, in recollection of this, the Yüe-pan were (say the Chinese) also known as the Shan-yü tribe. Thus the Chunni may possibly be the Avars, as *I suppose them to be* (*i.e.* the Yüe-pan), also known to the Chinese as Chunni (*i.e.* Shan-yü); and this suggestion receives support from the fact that the Chinese most distinctly trace the movements and descent of the Yüe-pan, who were originally Hiung-nu. But has Var anything to do with Avar? As for 'Blackwater,' the term is too common in Tartar history to be of any value. We are thus no further advanced; we can only repeat, the Avars of Europe cannot possibly be the Geougen of China.

[22] Here follows the story of their appropriating the name of Avars. As Justinian died in A.D. 565, it is evident the historian is harking back.

[23] The date seems uncertain, but of course it must have been previous to 602. Civil war raged for some years between Tardu and Tarxanth on the one side and Shaporo and Tulan on the other. Durli, son of Chulohou (who also took part in the civil war), may be said to have 'roused a faction' against Tulan, whose ally, called by the Chinese 'Nili Khan of the west,' was defeated by the Ouigours. But it is impossible to make the Greek and Chinese accounts square; both are too vague.

[24] In view of the vast distance separating the two rival Golden Mountains it is difficult to say where the supreme khan really lived. The Chinese tell us distinctly that the first six khans at least had their capital at Mount Tukin. (See note 4, p. 442.) Regarding Tangast, touching which Theophylact goes into a long disquisition here, possibly it should be Taugast. The Turkish inscriptions recently discovered establish the fact that the Turks called the Chinese by the name *Tavgas* (written by the Chinese themselves, *in imitation* of Turkish, *t'ao-hua-ss*). The Moukri *may be* the Mercrits, but I have never been able to discover whom Deguignes (vol. ii. p. 352) and Howorth (vol. i. p. 22) mean by the Merkits or Mercrits. The Chinese have no such name.

[25] The Cotzager may be the *Kot-sat* of the Chinese (an Ouigour tribe), or the *K'o-sat* (Khazars), who were near Captchak. As to the Chunni, it may be mentioned that *K'un-ni* was the title assumed, according to the Chinese, in the early centuries of our era, by the chieftains of the Wu-sun nomads of modern Ili; these peoples disappeared utterly from China before the Turks appeared.